

# Contents

<i>Foreword by Mac Anderson</i> .....	6
<i>Introduction by V. J. Smith</i> .....	8
The Handshake .....	10
The Letter .....	14
Coffee, Tears, and Fried Corn Meal Mush .....	24
Nights at the Round Table .....	32
What Matters Most.....	38
Doing a Little More.....	44
The Source of Happiness .....	53
It's a Wonderful Story .....	57
Road Trip.....	61
Celebrity Status .....	66
Saying Good-bye .....	71
A Time to Mourn .....	79
Those Precious Few Moments.....	85
<i>About the Author</i> .....	94
<i>Acknowledgments</i> .....	95

# Foreword

*by Mac Anderson*

∞ It was a Wednesday afternoon in late July when my assistant came into my office. She said that one of our customers had been waiting on the phone for a while to talk with me. He said it was important. I picked up the phone and the gentleman on the other end of the phone said, “My name is Pat Shaughnessy and I love your products, but that’s not why I’m calling. I’m calling because I just finished a book by VJ Smith titled: *The Richest Man in Town*. He then said, “Mac, you’ve got to read this book. I guarantee you that you’re not going to like it...you’re going to love it.”

Now, I’d be lying if I told you that this was the first time a customer had called with what they thought was a great book. And truthfully, they aren’t always so great! But there was something about this conversation that told me...this could be different. Pat’s enthusiasm was unwavering and when we hung up, I couldn’t get it out of my head.

A few days later I purchased a copy of the book. I shut my office door and read it, non-stop. When I finished I just sat there with tears running down my cheeks. Pat “nailed it”...I didn’t like it, I loved it!

I then picked up the phone to call the author, VJ Smith. If nothing else, I just wanted to thank him for writing a book that made a positive difference in the world. And the rest, as they say...is history! He was a fan of Simple Truths and said that he loved our products. VJ, who had self-published the book then said, "You're not going to believe this, Mac, but just recently, I told my wife that someday I'd like to partner with a company like Simple Truths who could take my book to the rest of the world."

I believe that some things are meant to be. *The Richest Man in Town* is a wonderful book. It's a true story that will grab your heart and not let go! All I can say is that I'm honored to make it a part of the Simple Truths "family" of inspirational gift books.

Thank you VJ for writing a book that will make a positive difference for years to come...and, thank you Pat for letting me know about it!

*Enjoy -*

Mac Anderson  
Founder, Simple Truths

# Introduction

*by V. J. Smith*

∞ *I'm so glad I found you.*

My friend, Aaron “Marty” Martinson, wrote those words in a note to me. On the pages that follow, you will discover that he didn’t find me. I found him. And, thanks to Marty, I remembered a few things about life that I hadn’t really thought about for a long time.

For years I had grand visions of writing a book about a leader who changed the course of history. I filled my personal library with biographies of presidents and statesmen. I wanted to understand what made their lives great—and what might be missing from mine.

In looking for answers I turned to books written by people who are successful in business and industry. For a while I searched for excellence, then I compared my habits to those of highly effective people. More recently, I tried to figure out which mouse I was in the pursuit of cheese. Like millions of people, I thought success equaled happiness.

The book I've written, though, is about a simple man who ran a cash register. He worked hard and was good to people. That, in turn, made him happy.

Can it be so simple—so free of complications? Marty thought so. He showed me how to be a better person, not one wealthier or more successful or more powerful.

*He changed my life—forever.*

CHAPTER ONE  
The Handshake

∞ It's amazing what can happen just by paying attention. Besides, I never thought I would have a life-changing experience at Wal-Mart.

I don't remember the exact date I met Marty for the first time. Up to that moment, nothing that day seemed particularly important—certainly not what brought me to the store in the first place. Like a lot of people who want to get through a checkout line, my thoughts were on speed, nothing more. The line I was standing in wasn't moving as quickly as I wanted, and I glanced toward the cashier.

There stood an affable-looking man in his seventies. Slightly stooped and of average build, he wore glasses and a nice smile. I thought, well, he's an old guy and it probably takes him a little longer